

REGIFTING

Ephesians 4:1-16

(Read Ephesians 4:1-16)

INTRO: Have you ever regifted something? Apparently it's something people do, but it's considered kind of tacky. As you can tell, I'm not that familiar with the term, so I checked the Merriam-Webster dictionary and it defines regifting as "*to give someone a gift that was previously received from someone else.*" By that definition, I'm not sure I have ever knowingly regifted something.

Here is a poll that revealed . . .

The Top 5 Excuses Why People Regift

1. It was a perfectly good gift that I simply didn't want or couldn't use: **90.8%**
2. It was something I knew the recipient would genuinely like: **45.3%**
3. I didn't have money to buy a new gift: **36.9%**
4. I didn't have time to buy something new: **27.7%**
5. I didn't like the gift recipient, so I didn't care what I gave him or her: **12.5%**

The article from which I got that list was filled with regifting horror stories such as girlfriends receiving old gifts their boyfriend had previously given another girl and of receiving a gift in a gift bag that was still in the exact condition it was received by its original recipient – spider webs and dead daddy long legger included.

And for everyone who is in Financial Peace University, penny-pinching Dave Ramsey suggested these . . .

Basic Rules for Regifting (He goes into more detail with each one, but I'll not take the time.)

- 1. The gift should make sense.**
- 2. Take off the gift tag!**
- 3. Don't regift gifts you received from meaningful people.**
- 4. Don't regift family gifts. (let me explain this one a bit)**

This should go without saying, but we're saying it anyway: Don't give family heirlooms away.

- 5. Avoid regifting within the same circle of friends.**
- 6. Beware of the regift that keeps on giving. (An explanation again)**

If an item has been sitting in your "regifting closet" for a couple years, you might not remember where it came from.

- 7. Give sooner rather than later.**

For example, there's only very few people who want your unopened Wham! CD.

- 8. Regift in moderation.**

- 9. Rewrap the gift.**

- 10. Be honest.** (if you regift and goof, admit to it)

Well, today I want to talk about the regifting that is never tacky. It's also never inappropriate and you don't ever have to remember where it came from because you always know. Paul tells us in our scripture for this morning, *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.* Ephesians 4:11-12. The point is, Christ, by the Holy Spirit, has gifted every Christ Follower with gifts, graces, and talents that we are to use for his Kingdom. We are to pay them forward. It's regifting at its best. And then he goes on to tell us . . . *to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.* (v. 1a). Our calling is to use the gifts we've received in service to him and to humanity. That's what they're there for. Let's look at it.

Starting right at the beginning, Paul points out. . .

We are a unity

- We have many gifts but they are all important for carrying out God's will. This is a theme in several of Paul's letters. In addition to what we have here in Ephesians, in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 Paul recites lists of spiritual gifts given to Christ followers that make the Church a well-oiled ministry machine for spreading the Gospel and for ministering to needs. And if you look at those gifts in each list, you'll notice that they are not the same list. Yes, there is some overlap, but in actuality, they are not exhaustive. There are still more gifts.
- So instead of setting us apart, our gifts are what unify us. Yes, we are gifted differently, but none are better or worse. They are ours for service in a diversity that is unified. Archibald Hunter puts it this way, "*Paul sees*

the perfect Church, not as a collection of perfected saints, but as one full-grown humanity, fully expressing what Christ is. The Church is viewed not as so many individuals pressing on to perfection, but as a single organism growing to its full strength and becoming fit for the purpose which God intended for it.” And that purpose is, in Paul’s words, *the body of Christ, built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and becoming mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* (vv 12-13). Regifting means being all we can be in Christ, so everyone one can be all they can be in Christ. Paul says it this way, *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* (vv. 4-5)

- And it’s not of our choosing . . .

We are gifted by Christ

- Each gift is crucial. Some are not as glamorous, but all are necessary. Some gifts bring more recognition, others are more behind the scenes, all are important. More often than not the Holy Spirit pairs our gifts with our personality. I believe he created me, a social butterfly, to be a shepherd. I believe he created Evan, less social than his father in law, for sure, to be one who listens first and acts with wisdom.
- Sometimes I have wondered what God was up to what he called certain people into their respective ministry but he always shows that his ways are above my ways and his thoughts above my thoughts. When I was in seminary with my friend Chuck, I thought him much better suited to be a professor than a pastor. But then as we ministered over the next 35+ years I saw him in action I realized what a gifted shepherd he was. For years, my friend David was the pastor of a very large BIC Church, and he often said, in his South Carolina drawl, “*I love being a pastor, its people I can’t stand!*” This was a foreign language to me. I LOVE people! How can you pastor and not love people? Then I thought how David shepherded me as a younger colleague, and I knew he did the same for his parishioners, and I realized, once again, that God’s gifting is perfect and he knows what he’s doing.
- What this text points out as much as anything is that we are all ministers. I might be an ordained minister, but every one of us are ministers. My friend Scot is what many would consider the pastor of Ashland Christian Church out on Orange Road, but every time he introduces himself, he says he is the “head minister”. That shows the polity of that denomination but it also points out the truth – every Christ Follower is a minister. It points out Paul’s truth in verse 16, that from Christ, *the whole body, (that’s the Church) joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.* We each have a ministry and we each have a part in the body of Christ.
- And finally, we might not be a pastor but . . .

We all lead someone, and as we do, we are being Jesus

- As we regift what the Holy Spirit has anointed us with, we are helping others grow out of the immaturity of the world. As we attain that full measure of Christ, Paul points out that we will no longer be infants who naively soak in the false teaching of the world and from that experience, we can lead others with us.
- Deceit is the name of the game for the world, but truth and love is what we are to be about. When the rich young religious leader came to Jesus seeking the way to eternal life, Mark 10:21 says that Jesus *looked at him and loved him* and spoke to him the hard truth of what that would require. Regifting means speaking the truth, and speaking it in love.
- Again, looking at verse 16, that’s what makes the body of Christ strong, it’s built up in love. As we build up in love, as we pass on the gifts we have been blessed with, we are being Jesus to a desperate world.

Conclusion: These unprecedented days are full of opportunity for our witness. People are looking for comfort, truth, peace, and hope. All that is wrapped up in one name, Jesus. We are his followers. He has equipped us for his service. Let’s not miss the chance to speak in the midst of a plague. Use you gifts for the Kingdom. One commentator, wrote, “*Every good thing we have is the gift of the grace of Christ.*” And we must never keep the good things of Christ to ourselves. Pass them on. Pay them forward. Regift them. Amen.